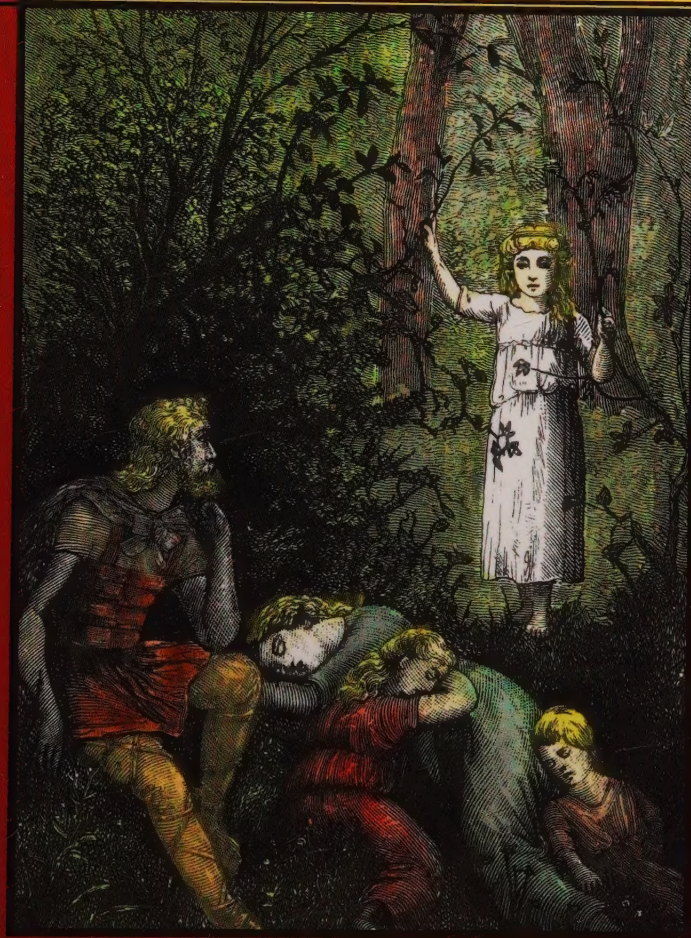



THE MAGIC RUNES

A TALE OF THE TIMES OF CHARLEMAGNE



EMMA LESLIE



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THE MAGIC RUNES



BETWEEN THE TREES CAME A LITTLE GIRL.

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EMMA LESLIE
JUNIOR CHURCH HISTORY SERIES

THE
MAGIC RUNES

A TALE OF THE TIMES OF CHARLEMAGNE

BY
EMMA LESLIE

Illustrated by
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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

In *The Magic Runes*, Emma Leslie has used a simple story to teach us some important lessons about spreading the Christian faith. On the one hand, we have Emperor Charlemagne seeking the conversion of pagan Saxons by any means, including military force. On the other hand, we have English monks risking their lives to share the truth of the gospel with their fellow Saxons, and Adalinda and her father humbly denying themselves to show God's love to a Saxon family.

I am reminded of the words of Paul in I Corinthians 1:27, "*But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.*" We should never underestimate what God desires to do through the lives of those like Adalinda, who are willing to live a life of Christ-like self-sacrifice, and the impact that, through Him, they will have on an unbelieving world.

Daniel Mills

November, 2009

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The Authorities from which the historical portion of this story has been compiled are:

Thorpe's *Northern Mythology*

Kitchen's *History of France* (*Clarendon Press Series*)

Guizot's *History of France*

Neander's *Church History*

Fry's *History of the Church*

HISTORICAL NOTES

Charlemagne: Born in 742 A.D., Charlemagne became king of northern France at the age of twenty-six. By the time of his death in 814 A.D. Charlemagne had conquered most of western Europe and made it part of his empire. He instituted many reforms, including improvements in farming, trade, education, justice, and culture, as well as establishing the system of *feudalism* which lasted for about 400 years. Closely allied with the Roman Church, Charlemagne sought to convert all the people within his domain to Christianity, using whatever means necessary, including force.

Alcuin: A scholar and teacher originally from England, Alcuin was invited by Charlemagne to lead his famed "School of the Palace," where his pupils included Charlemagne himself, as well as Charlemagne's two sons and many other young men and clerics.

HISTORICAL NOTES

Wittekind: Along with his brother, **Albion**, Wittekind led the pagan Saxon tribes in a prolonged military campaign against Charlemagne, which ended in 785 A.D., when both Wittekind and Albion decided to accept Christianity and be baptized.

Charcoal-burners produced charcoal by slowly burning large stacks of wood without oxygen. This was done by covering the wood with dirt or clay. The charcoal was then sold as a fuel because it burned much hotter and more cleanly than ordinary wood.

The Vikings contemptuously called Jesus the “**White Christ**,” contrasting Him with one of their own gods, “Red Thor,” named for his red hair and warlike character. The term “white” implied weakness and cowardice and was used in a similar way to our modern-day use of “yellow”.

FRANCE AND GERMANY

(CIRCA 785 A.D.)



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THE MAGIC RUNES

THE MAGIC RUNES

CHAPTER I

THE HERO-CHILD

A LONG cavalcade of travel-stained, weary-looking men, women and children were plodding slowly along through a rutty road or clearing, in a dense forest, one evening, near the end of the summer of 782. Sad and despairing looks were exchanged between the prisoners from time to time, but no one ventured to speak except the guards, who were conducting them from their native land of Saxony to another part of the great king Charlemagne's dominions.

CAVALCADE: *procession*

DOMINIONS: *kingdom*

They were not more harsh, perhaps, than soldiers usually were in those rough times, but to be kind to these Saxons they thought would seem as though they cared little for Christianity, for these prisoners were heathens, who again and again had defied the great Christian champion Charlemagne. After their supposed subjugation, they had murdered the missionaries who went to teach them, and returned to the old idolatry with its savage customs and cruel rites.

The Frankish king, who had united most of the Christian states of Europe under his rule, was determined to drive heathenism away, and so now he had ordered that many of the unconquerable Saxons should be taken to those parts of his kingdom where Christianity was well-established, and these were now on their way. They cared little for the rough guards or the flourishing of spears and battle-axes; but the more timid women

and children quickened their flagging footsteps at the sight of the gleaming weapons, and thus they were frightened onward for a little distance, until utter weariness overcame even the timidity of some, and they sank down helpless by the roadside.

"I told thee the distance was too great," said one of the officers to his companion, as he saw two or three of the weakest fall out of the ranks. "Half the women and children will drop dead on the road if we go much further."

The other muttered something as he looked down at the cut and bleeding feet of the woman before him. He saw it was impossible for her to go further, for two of her children had flung themselves upon her, and were even in a worse condition than their mother, while another and another dropped down at sight of them.

"Call a halt," said one of the officers, with a groan.

But consternation rather than relief appeared in the faces of the Saxons, and one old man more bold than the rest ventured to remonstrate with the officers.

“Do you want the spirits to carry us off that you bring us here to their stronghold? Presently they will be abroad, and woe to any mortal found invading their kingdom. Be merciful, my masters, and put us to the sword, here, as we stand. We fear not death, but make us not the sport of these enemies of mankind.”

The officers looked at each other in silence and shivered visibly. They were brave men, the bravest and most reliable of Charlemagne’s army, and would not have shrunk from the face of mortal foe, though they had been ten times outnumbered; but they shared in a less degree the fears of their prisoners, and cursed their folly for entering the forest so late in the day.

Encouraged by their hesitation another

CONSTERNATION: *sudden alarm and dismay*

REMONSTRATE: *protest*

stepped forward. He was pale and wasted now from illness and recently-healed wounds, but there was the light of dauntless courage in his eyes as he said:

“Leave me behind with the woman. She is my wife, and I will share her fate, whatever it be. But journey forward with these. It may be their strength will hold out until the forest is passed.”

“Aye, aye, let us go forward,” shouted, or rather groaned, half-a-dozen Saxons in chorus.

The two officers held a whispered consultation upon this proposal, and at last it was decided to act in accordance with it. Several who had fallen down had struggled to their feet again, for the horrors of the march were as nothing to the terror that possessed them at the thought of being left behind in the realms of the forest spirits.

So the tramp, tramp, of the weary feet went on, and the little party of four were left

by themselves. The woman had mercifully escaped from the terror for the present, for she was insensible; and the children were too much overpowered with fatigue to think of anything but the blessed rest on their mother's bosom.

So the man sat and watched in grim silence the passing away of his companions, listening to their retreating footsteps until no sound was heard save the chirrup of the birds or the rustling of the leaves. But as the shadows lengthened, every woodland sound made the brave man start and shiver with undefined terror. More terrible than the battlefield to him was this silent watch in the gloaming, waiting for he knew not what, expecting each moment that the dreaded enemies of mankind would make themselves visible before him, or fly off perhaps with his children in different directions, while he would be powerless to raise a finger in their defense.

INSENSIBLE: *unconscious*

GLOAMING: *dusk*

Presently a strange sound fell upon his ear, like the voice of a child singing, but to Godrith it only brought fresh terror. Great drops stood on his brow as he glanced at his unconscious wife and children. Now his hour had come, and the forest spirits were about to wreak their vengeance on him for invading their territory. Here his gods were powerless, whatever they might be able to do for him on the battlefield. They could not aid him now, and so the man had nerved himself for the worst, when, through a narrow alley between the trees opposite came a little girl, peering under the bushes, and occasionally stooping to pick up something and put it into her lap, but still singing in a joyous, unconscious fashion.

So intent was she on her singing and nut-gathering that she did not see the little group of wayfarers, and when her eyes did at last fall upon them, it would be hard to decide which looked the most frightened.

She stood spellbound with fright, staring at the unwonted spectacle, while Godrith sat expecting this forest spirit to fall upon them in wrath and indignation for venturing to sit there. At length his Saxon spirit of daring returned sufficiently to enable him to say, "Come on, and do thy worst. We are in thy power now."

For a moment the child paused as if wishing to run away, then, gathering courage, she slowly came a little closer. "Are they asleep?" she asked, and then seeing the torn, blood-stained little feet, she forgot her terror in pity for them, and said, "Shall I fetch you some water and healing salve?"

These words put Godrith into a state of perplexity not easy to be comprehended. "Who art thou?" he demanded.

The question startled the little girl, and she stepped back a few paces as she timidly answered, "I am Adalinda, the daughter of Pepin the charcoal burner."

But the traveler shook his head as he muttered, "It is Scyld, the hero-child, come to aid us," for he could not get rid of his superstitious fears sufficiently to believe the girl was a mortal like themselves, and, as it was clear to him by this time that she had no evil intention towards them, then she must be one of the good spirits favorable to mankind; but he would have to obey her commands, whatever they might be.

The little girl knew nothing of what was passing in the strange traveler's mind, but she saw that he looked less fierce, and so she ventured a step nearer to make a closer inspection of the woman and children. "Do not move before I come back," she said, "I will fetch some water, and bring my father, if he has come home," saying which, the little girl ran back the way she came, leaving the man still in a maze of puzzled bewilderment.

"It must be brave Scyld, for no mere mortal child would dare to roam alone through

the terrible forest; singing, too, in the very stronghold of the spirits,” and he shivered at the bare thought of such temerity.

In a little while the girl returned, bearing in her hands a large drinking horn full of water, and a good-sized loaf of coarse bread, which she silently handed to the man, then drew forth a piece of white rag from her bosom, which she wetted, and laid a piece of on each of the bleeding feet.

Godrith watched her with eager eyes as she tenderly took out the thorns. “Who art thou?” he asked again.

“Only a little Christian maiden,” she said, still proceeding with her work.

“But—but we are not Christians,” said Godrith, “we are Saxons, followers of the mighty Woden.”

“It matters not,” said the little girl calmly, “the White Christ loves Saxons, and hath sent me to help you.”

“But I own Him not—I have never sworn fealty to Him,” exclaimed the man.

BARE: *plain*

TEMERITY: *boldness*

The little girl shook her head. "All that is because thou dost not know Him," she said.

By this time the woman began to stir and show signs of returning consciousness, and the girl lifted the children gently, and laid them beside their father, who seemed almost as powerless as they were. In point of fact, the girl's last statement, that she was a Christian maiden, and had been sent by the White Christ to help them, was far more perplexing than his former theory about her being the fabulous Scyld, the hero-child, celebrated in their songs, and his mind was in a state of amazement as he silently watched her raise his wife's head and give her some water.

"Where are we?" asked the woman faintly, as soon as she had recovered a little.

"Not far from shelter," said the girl, "my father will be here soon," and even as she spoke, footsteps were heard, and then the grimy figure of the charcoal burner was seen approaching.

WODEN: *a Saxon god*

FEALTY: *to be faithful*

"Peace be to thee, friend," said the newcomer, speaking in the Saxon tongue like his daughter.

The sight of the man somewhat restored Godrith to his normal condition, for he looked like what he professed to be—a very commonplace charcoal burner, with nothing mysterious about him, except his choice of a dwelling place.

The children were rousing up now, and began crying for their mother, but their father instantly quelled their complaining, reminding them that at the Druids' school they had learned to be brave, but that they were showing themselves cowards now.

"We will be brave, Father," whispered the youngest, a boy of six, while the girl silently wiped her tears away, and looked at Adalinda, who appeared to be about her own age.

"My hut is close by," said the charcoal burner, after surveying the group for a minute or two in silence. "We will carry thy

QUELLED: *silenced*

wife between us," he said, addressing the man, who instantly rose to his feet, thankful for this offer of shelter.

The woman was soon lifted from the ground, Pepin taking care that the greater part of the burden fell to him, for he could see that her husband was in no fit condition to carry her, although it would not do to tell him so.

In truth, by the time the hut was reached, Godrith was so exhausted, that Pepin easily persuaded him to stay by his wife, while he went back to fetch the children by himself.

The hut was firmly built of the tree trunks felled in the clearing, and was divided into an inner and outer room, the inner room being supplied with a bed of dried leaves and a chest. This was Adalinda's bedroom, but Godrith was directed to take his wife there, while his host went back for the children. Another sack of leaves was dropped from a recess, and laid on the floor of the outer

room for them, and then Adalinda helped her father to prepare a meal, for their guests were very hungry as well as footsore.

Fortunately, the little hut was not without provisions. Meal and dried boars' flesh had been bought in exchange for charcoal only a few days before, and a fire was soon lighted on some stones outside, and porridge made and meat cooked in a very short time.

Godrith looked at the food suspiciously at first, fearing lest some poisonous herb had been mixed with it, for it was hard to believe that a Christian would give such help and hospitality to a heathen Saxon. The Christians wanted all the world for themselves, and so were bent on exterminating all who differed from them.

This was the deduction the Saxons had drawn from the treatment they had received from the champion of Christianity, Charlemagne; and it was not surprising that they should think thus, for in his zeal the

Frankish king was continually forgetting the advice of the good English monk, Alcuin, and urged on by his fierce paladins and his own eager temper, he used fire and sword to convert his heathen subjects.

Some devoted missionaries from England—monks who held not their lives dear if only they could win these people to Christ, followed the conquering army, and were listened to for a time until the people had somewhat recovered from their defeat, and their old priests resumed their sway. Then the missionary and his few sincere converts were either murdered or driven away, and the whole district was in revolt and openly returned to paganism again.

This had been the story for years past, so it was not surprising that Godrith should receive his host's kindness with some suspicion at first.

PALADINS: *the twelve companions of Charlemagne*

SWAY: *influence*

CHAPTER II

STRUGGLE AND VICTORY

ADALINDA looked rather indignant when she saw their guest scowling at the food set before them.

"It's good," she said shortly, and feeling very hungry, she took an iron ladle and helped herself to a bountiful supply.

Her father looked at her rather reproachfully, but this action of hers served to reassure their guest. He also remembered that he had a certain magical stone, warranted to secure the possessor against all poisons; for these pagans were devout believers in all sorts of magic.

Thinking, therefore, that if these Christians had brought them there to poison

them, he could defeat their aim, he ventured to help himself and the children from the steaming dish before him, and then he took some to his wife in the inner room. After supper he went with his host to examine the palisading round the hut. A space had been cleared for a garden, that supplied the little household with herbs and vegetables, and to protect this, as well as the hut, from the attacks of wild boars and wolves, a strong fence of tree trunks had been set up round it.

Godrith was not given to talking, but before they returned he ventured to say, with a stealthy glance at the surrounding trees, "I wonder you choose to live in such a spot."

His host lifted his cap, and looked up at the deep purple of the evening sky, as he said reverently, "Nay; why should I fear? the White Christ whom I serve hath conquered all the powers of evil."

"And—and the forest spirits do not dare to

PALISADING: *fencing*

STEALTHY: *cautious*

touch you?" whispered Godrith, when they were safe inside the hut. He did not dare to mention them outside, for fear they should fall upon him in their wrath.

Pepin smiled at his guest's evident terror. "The White Christ hath conquered the king of these evil spirits," he said, "therefore they dare not touch me."

Christian though he was, he had by no means got rid of the popular superstition concerning elves and spirits peopling trees and rivers, rocks and fountains. The river gods and the forest spirits were always hovering around him, only they had no power to touch him so long as he was true to his King.

"And the world without is but as the world within us," went on the charcoal burner. "The blood of Christ—the sanctifying life of Christ within me, must conquer and subdue the evil passions that will else destroy me."

But this was a little beyond the comprehension of his guest. He knew nothing of this inner kingdom, but he wanted to hear more of the King who had subdued into something like obedience these mischievous spirits, who had defied the incantations of their most powerful priests, and whom, they were obliged to admit, were beyond their control.

It was a new aspect of Christianity, for he had looked upon it as a system to make all men slaves, and it was this that had roused the brave free spirit of the Saxons to resist it.

“But your church tithes and your punishments of those who eat meat on Frigga’s day—Frigga, our goddess, our ‘Woden wife’—why should her day be saddened? Is it not to make slaves of us all?” demanded Godrith.

The charcoal burner sighed. Too well he knew that these things were a stumbling

block and a hindrance, not only to the heathen Saxons, but even to those who professed to be Christians, for so much was made of these outward observances, that men had begun to think that the religion of Christ went no deeper than an external profession of it.

The grand old English missionary, Alcuin, had tried to convince Charlemagne himself that what was needed, was more teachers to explain the Gospel, not tax gatherers to collect tithes, and spies to report people who ate meat on Friday; but, as yet, his exhortations had not produced much effect, and many, besides Pepin, were grieved to the soul about this. He did not try to hide his feeling from his guest. "I, too, hate the gathering of these church tithes," he said. "Let a man give willingly, as God hath prospered him; but I would that it were a freewill offering, and until the heathens had learned to know Him, and brought of their substance gladly,

I would have none of their gifts."

"Then thou dost not think thy Christianity perfect?" said Godrith eagerly.

"Nay, nay; the giving of tithes and abstaining from meat on Fridays is not Christianity—these are but the outward symbols of it. To be a Christian in very deed, is not giving, or abstaining, but believing in the Lord Christ, who loved us, and gave Himself for us—gave Himself a sacrifice and an example, that believing in Him, and loving Him, we might follow in His footsteps; for He went about doing good to all men—healing the sick, and kind even to His enemies; denying Himself comfort and pleasure, for the good of others."

As he said this, the charcoal burner looked at his little daughter, and Adalinda understood that the last words were intended for her, rather than for her guests; and she hung her head and pouted. She did not like the idea of these people taking up their

abode with them like this. She thought that when they had rested and had a meal they would be ready to resume their journey; but she had overheard a few words pass between the husband and wife—heard Godrith say, “As they seem so kind, we will stay here for the present.”

Now, to be turned out of her room—the little room her father had taken so much trouble to make comfortable for her—was not at all to Adalinda’s mind. She was like many other people—willing to be kind so long as her own comfort was not interfered with; and to have these people stay would seriously inconvenience them. True, her father would think nothing of this, but Adalinda persuaded herself that she ought to take care of him, and not let him be imposed upon; and so she had already made it apparent to her guests that their continued stay would not be welcome to her; and her father had seen it. It troubled and

perplexed him too; and when Godrith went to his wife's room, he stepped outside the hut to think over what he ought to do in these unforeseen circumstances.

Presently, as he stood leaning on the fence, a little hand was slipped in his, and Adalinda crept close to his side. "Oh, Father, I thought we should have no talk tonight," she said, with something like a sob.

Pepin clasped the little hand, but did not speak for a minute or two. At length he said, "What is it, my darling?"

Then Adalinda's tears burst forth.

"Are those heathens to stay with us?" she sobbed, "to have my room and—and—" eat up all our food, she was going to add, but she checked herself.

"It is a sacrifice for you to give up your room, I know, Adalinda," said her father, "but do you not remember what the holy father Alcuin told us, that without sacrifice we could not serve the Lord Christ—could

not be His faithful soldiers and servants?"

"But for these heathen Saxons," objected the girl; "they do not serve the Lord Christ."

"And what are we better than heathens if we refuse to follow in the footsteps of the Lord, who gave His life for the ungodly."

"But—but I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, Father; I am not a heathen; I believe His blood was shed to wash away my sins."

"Yes, yes, my dear, and believing this, His life must be in you, working in you, as the life in the tree works through all the branches, making them bud and blossom and bring forth fruit. It is not enough to say 'I believe,' for fiends 'also believe and tremble,'¹ but a Christian must believe by taking hold of Christ, like a branch grafted into a tree. His life must be in us, or whatever we may call ourselves, we are but heathen still, in worse cases than these Saxons—these pagans."

¹ JAMES 2:19

"But, Father, must we give up our house to these people? We were so happy together—you and I—and we did not want them to come and disturb us."

"My dear, we must think what He would do if He were here now. That will be the best way to consider the matter, I think, and if we are truly joined to Him and His life is in us, we shall only desire to follow in His footsteps, even though it is not pleasant for us to do so."

No more was said, but under the quiet stars they kneeled down together, and the father prayed for wisdom, and guidance, and patience to follow in the footsteps of Him who had given His life a ransom for them. Then they went back, hand in hand, the little girl touched and subdued, and the father wondering how he could make things more comfortable for his darling.

It was not pleasant to have their home invaded by strangers, their pleasant summer

house, for they did not live in the forest all the year round. When winter came they would move back to the village, and find some occupation there; but they came here every summer, and Adalinda always looked forward to this time, and never got tired of their lonely forest life where she could have her father all to herself when his work was over, and while he was away from her she could wander about round their hut planning some little surprise for his return. Now there would be an end of all this if these people were to stay with them, and at the sight of the two children lying on her father's leaf-bed Adalinda's tears broke out afresh.

"Not even a bed for you to sleep upon," she said, angrily.

"Hush, hush! my girl, that matters not. 'Tis few, I trow, who have a bed; and it will not hurt me to sleep now where I have slept nearly all my life—on the ground."

TROW: *suppose*

"But I made the bed for you," said Adalinda, who would have liked to turn the children off it if she could.

"And now the Lord doth ask us to lend it to Him for these poor over-driven sheep of His, and can we refuse? No, no, Adalinda, you would not grudge what we can do for these. Go and lie down beside them, and I will sleep here by the door."

In truth there was no other place for him to sleep, for the hut had only been built for the two of them, and to take in four more occupants made it uncomfortably full.

It was not long, however, before Adalinda and her father, as well as their guests, were fast asleep, and they were none the worse the next morning for being a little overcrowded, for there was plenty of ventilation through the unstopped chinks between the logs.

Pepin roused his little daughter at day-break to assist him in the work of getting breakfast ready, for he knew she would be

disappointed if he did not do this. She was as bright and cheery as a lark this morning.

"We will have breakfast out here," she said, setting down the dish for the porridge near the stones where the fire was burning.

Her father had already begun his meal, for the guests were still asleep, and he was anxious to set off to his work as soon as possible, and so had cut himself a slice from the rye loaf to eat while the porridge was boiling.

"You will be kind to them, Adalinda," he said, in a gentle tone, nodding towards the hut.

"I am going to try, Father," said the girl, with a rising color, "but I think my heart is like this forest, full of evil spirits, only the forest spirits are more obedient to the White Christ than my temper spirits are," she added.

Her father smiled. "But to know they are evil, and must be fought against, is something," he said. "And the White Christ will

conquer the enemies within as well as those outside of us if we will but seek His help."

"Yes, Father."

She was busy now pouring out the porridge, and she pressed her father to make a good breakfast, assuring him that she would prepare some more for their guests as soon as they got up.

"God bless you, my daughter. Who knows but we may be able to show these people they have been making quite a mistake about Christianity. But don't talk about it, dear, unless they ask any questions. Be kind, as kind and gentle as you can to them; that will be worth more than all the talk." And Pepin, with a parting kiss, left his little daughter and hurried away to his work.

But he did not feel as happy as usual this morning. He could not help wishing that Adalinda had gone to walk in another direction and so have been spared this trial. With the usual weakness of human love, he would have sheltered his only child

from all pain and sorrow, forgetting that for her, as well as for himself, there could only be growth in grace through trial and struggle; that the kingdom of heaven—the kingdom of peace and joy that must reign within the heart, can only be gained by victory over self. He would have spared his little girl the pain through which only this kingdom can be won; and so he hoped the strangers would go away before he returned home in the evening, for he knew that their continued stay could only be a continual trial to Adalinda. But her heavenly Father, in His wiser, stronger love, saw that the trouble would be good for her and good for the strangers, too; and so He did not let them go away as Pepin wished.

CHAPTER III

THE TWO FRIENDS

ADALINDA stood stirring the porridge for their visitors' breakfast, and softly singing a hymn, when some sound caught her ear, and looking back she saw Godrith standing at the door of the hut, and evidently watching her.

She bade him good morning in a pleasant voice, and then said, "Breakfast will be ready directly, will you have it out here?"

The man grunted something in reply, and turned back into the hut, but in a minute or two the children came outside, and looked shyly at the girl.

"Sit down, and I will give you some of this," said Adalinda, taking up the iron

ladle as she spoke, for the children were looking wistfully at the steaming pot.

When they were served, Godrith appeared again, and his wife crept out after him, but still looking weary and ill, and almost unable to stand. Adalinda's heart was touched, as she looked at the poor woman. "Why did you get up?" she said. "We would have brought it to you."

"We must begin our journey again," said Godrith, with a stealthy glance at his wife, to see what she thought of the proposal.

"No, no, you must stay here," said Adalinda quickly; "you said last night you would stay," she hastily added.

The man looked at her in amazement. "You don't want us here," he said.

"Yes, yes, I do, indeed I do," said the girl, the tears filling her eyes as she spoke, for her heart was full of pity now, for the poor sick woman and weary-looking children, and she said in a lower tone, "The Lord Christ hath

bid me tend and care for you. Stay but awhile to rest, and then ye shall journey home."

But at the mention of "home," the woman burst into tears. "Alas! we have no home," she said, "the soldiers burnt our village, and cut down some of our sacred grove, and—"

"But, Mother, if King Charlemagne's soldiers had not come just as they did, the priests would have killed our poor slave, Aldyth, and they might have killed Alaric and me too," said the girl, looking up at her mother, and shuddering even now, at the recollection of the poor slave girl being dragged away from their home, and the scene of terror and confusion that followed in the sacred grove.

"Ye are not slaves," said her father coldly, "and for Aldyth—"

"Your priests would have killed a girl to please your gods?" interrupted Adalinda, in a tone of horror.

"And why not? Do not the gods ask us to

give of our choicest and best?" demanded Godrith.

Adalinda looked puzzled. She remembered hearing the English monk say, "that without sacrifice, there could be no service;" but he had explained that the sacrifice demanded was that of the heart—"our sin, our selfishness, our comfort, our honor if need be," the monk had said. Could it be that these Saxons, having at first been taught this same truth, had gradually changed it into this hideous mistake?

She said something of this, but was too confused, too horrified to make her meaning very clear, but she held Fastrade's hand close in her own, as though she feared her father might seize her next and order her to share the fate of the slave girl, Aldyth. "Come with me," she whispered, "I want you to tell me all about it—all about your gods—they must be cruel gods," she added passionately.

Fastrade looked surprised.

"Have you never heard of Balder the beautiful?" she said. "He is one of our gods—the god of light and joy."

"The god of light and joy! and yet your priests kill people to please him?" said Adalinda, in a tone of astonishment.

"Ah! not to Balder the beautiful and gracious god, but our great god Woden must sometimes be appeased when he is angry," said the little Saxon.

Adalinda drew her along, until they reached the shelter of a wide-spreading tree, where the moss and wild flowers formed a soft and variegated carpet underneath. The two children sat down here, but the next minute Fastrade started from her seat exclaiming, "It is a sacred tree—it is Woden's tree!"

"It is an ash," said Adalinda coolly, who had learned the names of many of the trees from her father. "Your god has no trees in *this* forest," she added confidently.

The little Saxon looked only half-convinced, and still held back. "How do you know that?" she whispered.

"Because my father has often told me that the Lord Christ is in the forest as well as in the convent and church, and will always take care of me," said Adalinda, in the same assured tone. "Come and sit down," she added, "and tell me some more. Have you any other gods besides Woden and Balder?"

"Oh yes! and our days are all called after them. How is it you can speak our Saxon tongue, and yet not know that?"

"My mother was a Saxon—she only died last year, and we always used to speak her tongue, though my father is a Frank. But she was a Christian; she had been baptized, and so she never thought about your Woden. She taught me about the great God, who made the sky, and the earth, and the trees, and the rain, and the sunshine."

Fastrade shook her head doubtfully. "That is too much for one god to do," she said.

“Woden is the father of the gods, and he gives them their work. Frey is the god of the rain and the sunshine, and he rides through the land in a splendid car, bringing peace and plenty wherever he comes; he does not bring storms—Thurnu, with his great hammer, makes the thunder to crash and roll. Then there is Tiu, the god of victory—the bravest of the gods, who put his hands into the mouth of the wolf Feuris—Woden’s sacred wolf; sometimes he is called Er, and we have a great fortress and town, named from him, Ehresburgh; but your king has thrown down our column of victory that stood there, Irmensul,” added the little Saxon with a sigh.

“But—but if you have so many gods, how can you remember them all?” asked Adalinda, in a puzzled tone. “Do you worship them all together?”

Fastrade shook her head at the question.

“No, no,” she said, “each god has his own day, and we call the day after him, so we

never forget them. There is Woden's-day, and his wife Frigga, her day is Fri-day, and Thurnu's-day, and Tiu's-day, and Saturn-day."

Fastrade laughed as she saw the look of dismay that overspread Adalinda's face when she heard that the common days of the week were so named after pagan gods, and to complete her discomfiture, Fastrade added: "And then there is Sun's-day and Moon's-day—every day is some god's day."¹

Adalinda was silent for a few minutes, but the central fact in her mind still was the cruelty of the sacrifices demanded by some of these gods, and she said at length:

"Ah, but you have no god like our Lord Christ. He is better than your Balder the beautiful, for He gave Himself a sacrifice for us."

"Gave Himself like Tiu gave his hand to the wolf Feuris," said Fastrade.

"Ah! but it was not only His hand, but all His life. My father says that all the time the

¹ The sun and moon were considered gods in Northern mythology.

Lord Jesus Christ lived in the world, His life was a sacrifice, as well as when He shed His blood on the cross for us."

"Tell me about it," said Fastrade, who had well-nigh exhausted her stock of knowledge concerning their own gods. "Why did He give Himself—shed His blood, as you say? I heard my father talking last night, and he said He must be great and powerful—greater than Grindel the fiend, or He could not control these forest spirits and keep them from harming you. Why, then, did He offer Himself a sacrifice?"

"Because He loved us, and because He wanted us to see that not anything else but ourselves could or would do for a sacrifice, so that your priests must have made a mistake, you see, in taking somebody else to offer for a sacrifice."

But Fastrade did not "see," nor would she believe it possible that the grand-looking, white-robed priests whom she had seen moving majestically about the sacred grove

could ever make a mistake. She had always been taught that they were great and wise and powerful, to be dreaded, perhaps, rather than loved, but quite incapable of making a mistake, as Adalinda suggested. But although she would not hear a word spoken against the faith in which she had been reared, she wanted to know something more about the Lord Christ who had sacrificed Himself; and Adalinda told her the story of His love, His love even for little children, whom He took in His arms and blessed.

“Like my mother does when my father is not near to see,” whispered Fastrade in a voice of wondering awe, for to hear of a God who *loved* little children was something so new and strange, so altogether wonderful to one brought up as she had been, that the news almost bewildered her at first.

In the religion taught by the priests of paganism there was no room for love. Their heaven, or Valhalla, was not a home of peace and joy, but a place where heroes went to

VALHALLA: *the hall of Odin in Norse mythology where warriors who died in battle were received*

battle every morning and returned to the hall of Woden to feast at midday; and so the love of fighting and the fierce contempt for death taught by their priests led them to look upon the gentler virtues as weaknesses to be repressed. Stern, brave, hardy men and women they were taught to be by their powerful priests, but the tenderness of love, even between parents and children, was something to be ashamed of and cast out, not indulged and fostered.

It came out as they talked, that their slave-girl had to be given up because Fastrade's father had offended the priests by something he had done, otherwise they might have been content with the bullock and horse he offered to give instead of her.

After talking for nearly an hour, and seeing how greatly interested her companion was in the story of God's love for men and women and little children, Adalinda suddenly exclaimed, "Now, you do believe, and you will be a Christian—say you will, Fastrade?"

But the little Saxon started to her feet at the question.

"Oh, no! no! I cannot be a Christian," she said, drawing herself up; "I am a Saxon—call me heathen or pagan if you like, but I am proud to be a Saxon." Then seeing how pained Adalinda looked, she added, in a softer tone, "Do you not see how it is? the White Christ is for you; Charlemagne and his soldiers and all his people have sworn to be his men, but we are free-born Saxons and our priests are Saxons too."

"And my mother was a Saxon, and our queen is Saxon, and I have heard my father say King Charlemagne himself is not wholly a Frank, but it does not prevent them being Christians. The Lord Christ is for all people, and not for Franks only."

But Fastrade shook her head. She could not understand this. She had heard of the White Christ in her old home in Westphalia, but it was always as the God of the

WESTPHALIA: *a region in the western part of Saxony*

Christians, and not for them, and she clung loyally to her old faith, much as her heart might yearn towards this loving Savior, who had given Himself a sacrifice for His people.

"Let us go back now," said Fastrade, after a lengthened silence. "I will tell my mother what we have been talking about, and perhaps—"

But here they were interrupted by the arrival of Alaric, who had been looking for them all round the neighborhood.

"Father says he shall go home again," panted the boy, breathlessly. "The soldiers have all gone back, and why should we go to this strange place where there are no free Saxons."

Fastrade looked disappointed.

"Go back," she said, "when the priests are all so angry with Father!"

"Ah! No, no, you shall not!" said Adalinda. "I will go and ask him to stay here," and she ran off at once, leaving the brother and sister to follow more slowly. But before she

reached the hut she met their mother, feebly dragging herself along the forest path.

"Where are they?" she asked. "We must begin our journey back again."

"No, no! you must not, you shall not!" said the girl, impulsively, and she ran on to where she saw Godrith standing, shading his eyes from the glare of the sun, and the moment she reached him she threw herself on her knees before him, exclaiming, "Oh, pray, do not go away! do, do stay here—you must stay," she cried, the tears raining down her face as she spoke.

The man looked at her in amazement.

"What is it?" he slowly uttered.

"I want you to stay here—here in the forest, where you will all be safe," she said, for Fastrade's talk about the priests being angry with her father had filled her with vague fear for their safety.

"But—but your home is not large enough for us all, and I thought you wished us to

go away," said Godrith. He was in a great strait. He had been left in the forest to die, either from starvation or the attacks of wild beasts; but succor had come to him, and now he must decide whether he would go forward into life-long banishment from home and friends and country, or back to the blackened ruins of the village that was still dear to his heart, and where he would at least find a few fellow-countrymen who had escaped from Charlemagne's soldiers. Only to go back would be to expose himself and his family to the anger of the offended priests, who understood nothing of forgiveness, and would surely revenge the insult he had been guilty of at the first opportunity.

It was the thought that he might escape the fury of the priests that made him exclaim to his wife, "We will stay here now!"

But when he heard Adalinda's complaining the night before it made his proud Saxon

STRAIT: *difficulty*

SUCCOR: *assistance, relief*

blood tingle, and before morning dawned he had decided to brave the anger of his priests rather than accept the grudging hospitality of these strangers, and having once made up his mind, it was not easy to move him from his purpose.

Adalinda prayed and pleaded and shed bitter tears over the unkind words she had used the night before, but all the concession she could wring from Godrith was, that he would not set out on his journey until the next day.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHILDREN'S SEARCH

WHEN the charcoal burner returned from his work, he saw, to his satisfaction, that Adalinda had overcome her dislike of their guests, for she and Fastrade were playing merrily together among the trees, while the poor woman, with something like a smile on her pale, careworn face, sat on the grass watching them.

The moment Adalinda caught sight of her father, she uttered an exclamation of delight, and ran forward to meet him, throwing herself into his arms, and hugging him affectionately. The sight of this joyful meeting between father and child was a novel one to the Saxons. Fastrade crept to her mother's

side, and slipped her hand into hers, while the mother stole a hasty glance towards her husband, to see if he had noticed the girl's action.

But Godrith was too much occupied in watching Pepin and his daughter to notice his own child, and so Fastrade nestled closer to her mother, whispering, "I have heard many wonderful things today, Mother, about the God of the Franks and the White Christ, who is greater than the forest spirits here. He, the Lord Christ, tells His people to 'love one another,'"¹ she said, by way of excuse for Adalinda and her father.

"Hush!" whispered her mother, with another stealthy glance at her husband, but clasping the hand more tightly.

"Don't you wish the White Christ was for Saxons? then—then—" but her mother pushed her aside, for she saw that her husband was looking at her, and, as the head of the family, it was his duty sternly to

¹ JOHN 13:34

repress such outpourings of love as they had just witnessed. To permit this would be to yield to a weakness every Saxon felt bound to conquer and overcome, both in himself and those dependent upon him; and so, although they could never kill out the Divine affection planted in the heart of parents by God Himself, they could so crush it down as to make it a pain and torment to the most gentle and loving hearts—such hearts as beat under the rough, coarse garments of Godrith's wife.

It was pitiful to see her sad, eager eyes, as they rested on her child's face, which she was afraid to kiss, and then looked at the outpouring of affection between the father and daughter, whose religion sanctioned and encouraged the indulgence of such natural feeling, and at that moment her heart echoed Fastrade's wish, and she resolved to learn something about this God of the Christians—this God of love. But there was

no time to think more of it just now, for Adalinda pulled her father to where she was sitting, and he insisted upon helping her to rise and walk back to the hut, where supper was already prepared.

The happiness of Adalinda and her father seemed to be infectious during the meal, for even Godrith forgot some of his sternness, and laughed and patted Alaric's head—a wonderful relaxation of stoical rule for him to indulge in.

After supper, Adalinda contrived to tell her father something of what she had learned concerning her guests during the day, and of her wish that they should stay with them, even though their home was made uncomfortable by overcrowding. "I won't mind it a bit, Father," protested the little girl. "I think if they would only stay, Fastrade would soon learn to love our Lord Christ; for she seemed so pleased and so surprised to hear that He loved little children."

"So you have been talking, then, as well as playing," said Pepin, with a smile at Adalinda's eagerness.

"I couldn't help it, Father, when she told me that boys and girls were burned to please their gods, and all through a mistake that the priests have made; it must be a mistake, you know," she added.

Her father shook his head and sighed, but did not reply.

"You will ask them to stay, won't you?" said Adalinda after a pause; "Fastrade's father could go to work with you, and they could live with us until the end of the summer. Do ask him not to go away tomorrow, for I know Fastrade and her mother, and little Alaric would like to stay with us."

"Well, well, I'll talk to him about it; see, he is coming this way, so you run back now, that we may have some talk together."

Adalinda ran away and joined Fastrade and Alaric in their search for some healing

herbs, that Godrith thought might be found growing in the forest. Wolfsbane and vervaine were both highly esteemed for their magical as well as their healing powers, and the children had been warned not to touch the sacred herbs if they saw any, but to mark the place where they grew, and come back at once to inform their mother.

They did not know how much depended upon the finding of these herbs, but Godrith had performed a certain incantation that was to decide the important matter, as to whether he should go back at once and help to arouse his countrymen again to resist these efforts of the Christian king to conquer and convert them, or, whether he should remain here for the present, and let future events decide the matter for him. Adalinda's persuasions had had some influence with him, and he saw that his wife and children would like to stay; indeed, they were in no fit condition to travel just now, but the finding of the magical herbs must

WOLFSBANE: *a poisonous bush with yellow flowers*

VERVAINE: *a medicinal herb*

decide the matter, not the health or inclination of wife and children; and yet he could not help feeling a little anxious about the result of the children's search, while he discussed the question of going or staying with the charcoal burner.

Adalinda knew that vervaine was esteemed for its healing qualities, and at once jumped to the conclusion that herb tea was to be made of it, such as the sisters of the convent prepared for sick people, and so, when she saw a little bunch of it growing at her feet after some diligent search, she instantly called to her companions to tell them of her good fortune, and gathered a handful at once, without waiting for their arrival.

Fastrade looked horror-stricken as she saw the fragrant plant in her friend's hand. "What have you done?" she gasped.

"Done! Picked all I could," said Adalinda, thrusting the bunches forward for her to smell it.

But Fastrade stepped back, afraid to touch it. "It has not been truly and rightly gathered," she said; "my father ought to have cut it, he only sent us to see if it grew in this forest. Ill luck will follow us now," she added with a sigh.

"Never mind, we will find some more for you, and I'll take this home for Father to dry for the nuns," said Adalinda lightly, and Fastrade was obliged to agree to the proposal. She could not help thinking though, that these Christians must be rather fortunate people not to be afraid of magical herbs, and to be protected from the assaults of evil spirits; but, not being a Christian herself, she reasoned that some misfortune would follow if she touched such herbs carelessly; so she would not go too near Adalinda while she carried it.

In a few minutes some more was found growing luxuriantly on a bank, but Fastrade drew back when she saw it, and took care to

prevent her little brother from approaching it.

But Alaric had found something very different during his search, and after glancing carelessly at the vervaine, he drew his sister towards a tree and then pointed to the trunk, on which some curious figures had been cut. She recognized them at once.

"There are priests here!" she said in an awestruck whisper; "they are bitter runes—the ill-luck has come, as I told you it would."

Adalinda felt strongly inclined to laugh at her companion's fears, but, seeing how real Fastrade's distress was, she resisted the impulse, and even offered to throw away the vervaine she had gathered.

"Oh, do, do!" said the girl eagerly, "and tell my father we have not touched a bit."

But Adalinda shook her head at this proposal. "No, no, I cannot do that," she said; "I cannot tell a lie. The Lord Christ would be

grieved, if I did not tell all the truth about it."

It was Fastrade's turn to be surprised now. "Does He see such little things," she said, in a tone of amazement.

"It is not a little thing to tell a lie, but a great sin," said Adalinda indignantly.

"And yet you did not mind the vervaine!" exclaimed her companion in a puzzled tone, and the two girls gazed at each other, as if trying to solve a curious problem. Altogether Fastrade thought their search was a most ill-omened one, for she knew how stern her father would grow when he heard of the vervaine being picked and the runes being cut on the tree. Her mother would not dare to kiss her, or even look kindly at her; and so at last she decided that one of the two misfortunes must be concealed, and as Adalinda persisted in declaring that she would tell the truth about the vervaine, even though she threw it away, then it only remained for

their discovery of the bitter runes to be concealed, and the circumstance forgotten, or, at least, never mentioned to their parents.

Alaric was easily persuaded not to say a word of what he had found, and Adalinda saw no harm in this concealment, as no direct untruth was to be told—indeed, she felt inclined to laugh over the circumstances, and doubtless it passed from her mind before they reached home again, for on their way back they were fortunate enough to find some wolfsbane, and Fastrade grew very much excited over her good fortune in being the finder of “Balder’s-herb,” for it was even more precious than vervaine in the eyes of the superstitious Saxons.

Now Pepin had been trying to persuade his guest to stay in the forest, only long enough for his wife to recover from her fatigue to resume her journey, and then they would all go together to the charcoal burner’s native village; for when he heard that Godrith had

some thought of going back to Saxony, he feared he might have done wrong even in succoring them, if they were to return and stir up further resistance to Charlemagne and Christianity. Pepin thought he had convinced him at last, that it would be much better, much safer to go home with him, in a few days' time, to his own Christian village, where he would be sure to find other Saxons; for the plan that had been adopted by the astute champion of Christianity was this:

Finding that the missionary monks made but small progress against the paganism of these people, he had begun to transport the Saxons into Frankish villages and towns. Prisoners of war were taken with their families some distance beyond the border, and there allowed to settle as ordinary citizens after being baptized. Thus surrounded by a Christian community, their old religion utterly ignored, they were looked upon and

spoken of as Christians; and as the conversion of the Saxons, by any means and all means was the object Charlemagne had set before him, to aid one to go back to idolatry would be a grave crime committed against the State, Pepin knew, to say nothing of his own desire to win these souls for Christ.

So his talk had been very earnest and very persuasive, and the picture he drew of the busy flourishing towns and villages, and how every man was a freeman under their great king, was very captivating even to Godrith.

"He is a great king," he murmured, with something like a sigh, "for none but a mighty man of valor could have thrown down our high and worshiped Irmensul, built to the honor and renown of our great forefather, Hermann. Yes, yes, Charlemagne is great!" said the Saxon with a groan.

"Aye, and he is a right noble king to foes as well as friends. Ask any in Aix-la-Chapelle,

where he dwells among his children in times of peace, and they will tell you the palace is a simple, happy home, where the king and his boys and girls learn reading and writing of the noble English monks, who have come hither to teach them."

But the picture of a mighty conqueror learning to read among his children was not such a captivating one to the rough Saxon.

"Our priests can do that," he said, rather contemptuously; "but it is poor work for soldiers." Still the prospect of peace and plenty, after the trials he had endured, was pleasant to contemplate, especially if he could settle near Aix-la-Chapelle, which was not so very far from his beloved land.

But while they were still talking, and Pepin was explaining that it would not be so difficult for him to maintain his family in his own Frankish village, the children returned. Fastrade hurried forward to tell her father that she had found both vervaine

and wolfsbane growing in the neighborhood.

That was enough for Godrith. All his friend's persuasions were useless now, the matter was settled and beyond further argument, for his divination directed that he should stay in the forest as long as he could; and so he told his host that he should neither go forward to the Frankish village he had been recommending, or back to Saxony at present. Whether he would have been so well-satisfied about the divination if he had known all the children had seen that day, is more than doubtful, but Adalinda and the little boy had forgotten all about the bitter runes before they got home, and if Fastrade thought of the terrible magic marks she had been taught to dread, she put the thought away from her, or else persuaded herself that the finding of "Balder's herb" was of such good to them, that she need not trouble herself about the bitter runes.

At all events, Godrith heard no word about the marks cut on the tree, and his host had to be content with the assurance that he had made up his mind to stay in the forest, and share in his labor of charcoal burning.

CHAPTER V

THE LOST CHILD

“**M**OTHER, Mother, where is Ally? I want Ally, we have found a little squirrel—see? Adalinda has got it,” and Fastrade dragged her mother forward to look at the little animal curled up in her companion’s arms.

“Where is Alaric?” asked the woman, looking round after she had peeped at the squirrel.

“I don’t know, I want to find him. Ally, Ally!” shouted Fastrade, running towards the hut.

“He is not there,” said her mother. “He went out with you, two hours ago.”

“Oh, no,” answered Adalinda, “he did not go with us.”

"We haven't seen him all the morning, Mother," put in Fastrade, still looking round the garden, as though her brother was hiding there.

"But he went out just after you, I saw him go," said her mother, looking a little alarmed.

The children often roamed about the forest under the guidance of Adalinda, but they had been told never to leave her, for fear they should lose their way, and Alaric had left the hut to join the girls just after they went out.

"Where can he have gone?" exclaimed the poor woman in growing alarm, after they had all shouted his name in turn as loudly as they could.

"He will soon come back," said Adalinda lightly. "He knows every path as well as I do."

The Saxons had been nearly a month in the forest now. Godrith had taken up the work of a charcoal burner for the time

being, and his wife had meanwhile done what she could to make the home more comfortable, while the children wandered about the forest talking of their past lives and the difference in their religion in the intervals of play, but never losing sight of certain landmarks, or straying very far from the hut, so that the fear of being lost seldom troubled them, and Adalinda felt sure the little boy would soon find his way back.

She sat down to examine her squirrel, which seemed to have injured one of its legs, and she was much more concerned about making that comfortable until her father came home to doctor it, than she was about the absence of Alaric, until an hour passed, and Fastrade came to her saying they could not find him anywhere.

"I'll come and look for him," said Adalinda laying down her squirrel in the bed she had prepared. "We'll soon bring him back," she said to the anxious-looking mother, and she and Fastrade started off in the opposite

direction to that they had taken in the morning.

They walked on, up and down the forest paths, calling, "Ally, Ally!" at every turn, and peering into every sheltered nook to see if he had fallen asleep anywhere, but there came no answering shout in reply, and no trace of him to be seen, and at last they turned homeward again in the hope of finding him there.

But his mother met them with a white, despairing face when she saw they had not found the boy. "What shall I do, what shall I do?" she uttered, wringing her hands in her anguish.

"Father will be home soon," said Fastrade, glancing at the sun, "and perhaps he will find him as he comes along."

But when the charcoal burners arrived it was with the same story, they had seen nothing of Alaric, and both were alarmed when they heard how long the child had been absent.

"He has strayed further into the forest and lost his way," said Pepin, as he cut a thick slice from the rye-loaf by way of supper.

"Or the spirits have seized him and carried him off to their haunts," said Godrith.

They went out together to search for the boy, Godrith full of vague horror and dread at the thought of invading and rousing the fury of these powerful forest spirits; but Pepin's thoughts were upon the most likely openings the boy would probably take. He knew the intricacies of the forest for miles round; and so it was agreed that he should be the leader, and almost unconsciously to himself Godrith took some comfort from the thought that the White Christ would protect him as well as Pepin, while they were together.

They walked about the forest for hours, calling and shouting, but were compelled to return home at last by the darkness and danger of falling a prey to wild beasts.

The next morning they were up at dawn

and again set off on a more regular search, but as they were returning homewards about midday to see if Alaric had got back during their absence, his father suddenly saw the marked tree, and recognized the bitter runes as Fastrade had some weeks before.

“Do you see that?” he gasped, pointing to the tree with a look of horror.

“What is it?” said Pepin, gazing at the tree, but not at all understanding why those queer-shaped letters cut in it should give his friend such a fright.

“We need not look further for the boy,” uttered his father with a groan, “one of our priests has been here—watching for weeks, perhaps,” he added as he looked at the magic runes.

“Ah! if we had only gone to Aix-la-Chapelle a week or two ago,” said Pepin—in a tone of regret and with something like reproach.

“Who was to know that our priests were here. If anyone could have told me of this it would have been a warning that I should

have understood well enough. Oh, these bitter runes! Oh, my boy, my boy, I would that they had taken me!" he groaned.

Pepin laid his hand on his companion's shoulder, but what could he say to comfort him? He knew that Godrith had seriously offended the powerful priests of Woden and had been threatened that, not only his slave should be taken from him, but that his children should be removed from his care, and now it seemed that they had begun to execute their threats, and Fastrade might be next snatched away.

"We must save the girl," he added, "we must set out on our journey tomorrow, for it may be they will try to take my Adalinda, too," he added, with some apprehension for the safety of his own child.

"Aye, there is no knowing what they may do or what spells they may work against us," said Godrith with a shiver of fear, as he again looked at the mysterious figures cut in the trunk of the tree, and which he feared

boded nothing but ill to him and his children.

Unconsciously he had begun to yield to his feelings of natural affection since he had been with Pepin and his daughter, and to have his children snatched from him now was bitter indeed.

His wife was almost overwhelmed with grief when he returned with no tidings of Alaric, but bringing the news that magic runes had been written against them here in the forest, and she at once became alarmed for the safety of Fastrade.

“She is not safe here, we must go away—go away at once.”

It was not the habit of the Saxons to give way to grief—tears were looked upon as a weakness to be repressed—and so the mother and father, after the first outburst, speedily grew silent over their sorrow. But they were not idle. Preparations for leaving the hut were at once commenced. Adalinda

COMMENCED: *begun*

busied herself making rye bread for their journey, for Godrith had decided to go back to Saxony and search for Alaric, while Pepin took his wife and daughter to Aix-la-Chapelle for safety.

For the charcoal burner it was but leaving his work in the forest a few weeks earlier than usual, but he wished this had been done before, and that Godrith was going with him. He had great hopes that the man had become favorably disposed towards Christianity, but if he went back to his native land now, this might soon be effaced among the pagan surroundings. Altogether it was a sad little party that set out from the timber hut at dawn the next day, for half a mile beyond the road parted, and Godrith would leave them, and husband and wife might never meet again.

When the moment came of parting from her father, Fastrade quite broke down. "It is all my fault, all my fault!" she exclaimed. "I

found the bitter runes when we went to look for the vervaine, but I was afraid to tell you, Father," and the poor girl sobbed as though her heart would break.

"You found the bitter runes and never told me of it," said her father slowly and sternly, as he thought how much trouble and anguish might have been spared them. But there was no time to scold now, for Godrith must hasten by the most unfrequented paths back to Saxony, while his wife and daughter pushed on with all speed to get out of the forest, and on to the village beyond before nightfall.

And so with a few parting words and a promise from Godrith to come to Aix-la-Chapelle as soon as he could obtain any satisfactory news about Alaric, they separated with hearts bowed down with sorrow and apprehension, but none with such bitter self-reproach as Fastrade.

The charcoal burner and his party were laden with bundles and sacks, containing

all their movable property; and so their progress was necessarily slow, but Pepin knew the road and where they would find shelter for the night; and so they had no anxiety on that score.

Just beyond the forest stood a monastery, and here they would obtain all they needed, both food and shelter being given by the monks to any travelers who might seek it. There were no inns in those days, and if it had not been for the hospitality afforded to friends and strangers alike, by the convents, traveling would have been far more difficult and dangerous than it was. They were truly houses of God to many a weary soul, for while their bodily wants were cared for, the brothers did not forget that this might be the only opportunity their guests would ever have of hearing the Word of God.

There were very few copies of the Bible existing, except in the libraries of these convents, and so it was the custom for one

of the monks to read from this or some other good book, as soon as supper was over. Pepin knew all about this, and he looked forward with eager longing to the reading and the singing that would follow, and when Fastrade and her mother grew weary, and seemed inclined to lag behind, he urged them to press on, telling them of the treat that lay in store for them, if they only reached the monastery in time.

“And they will give us food and shelter, and read, and sing for us,” exclaimed Fastrade, when Adalinda enlarged upon the topic. “Truly this Christianity is wonderful.”

Her mother had secretly doubted the truth of the statement about this, until Adalinda’s talk confirmed it, and then she, like Fastrade, grew so anxious to see it, that she forgot her weariness, and pushed on with such renewed vigor that the convent was reached an hour before sunset.

Pepin was known to the brotherhood, and eagerly welcomed, but Fastrade and her mother were no less kindly greeted. Their burdens were at once taken from them and bestowed in a place of safety for the night, and they were taken by the lay brother to the other end of the house, and delivered over to the care of the sisters of the convent.

Cleanliness was not a characteristic of the age, dirt being considered a sign of spirituality and conducive to holiness; so that it was not thought necessary to ask their guests to wash themselves after their journey, but all that they could do the kind-hearted sisters did for the poor woman. It mattered nothing to them that she was a Saxon, indeed, one of their number was a fellow-countrywoman, and when they heard who she was, they sent her to comfort and console her, for these were true sisters of charity and soon divined that the poor woman was almost heart-broken with trouble.

CONDUCTIVE: *leading*

DIVINED: *realized*

The Christian sympathy of the Saxon nun had soon broken down the reticence of paganism still remaining, and the poor mother's overcharged heart was relieved of half its anguish by being able to sob forth all its pain in the ear of a kind and tender listener. After hearing her sad tale, the nun directed her to Him whose ears are ever open to the cry of distress, telling her that He cared for and loved her boy as tenderly as she did.

After supper there was reading from the Gospel, the "Raising of the widow of Nain's son"¹ being chosen as the subject, for the comfort of their guest. Then a psalm was sung by all the community, while Fastrade and Adalinda stood almost entranced.

"If I could only stay here, I should soon be a Christian, too," whispered the woman, as they went to bed.

"Oh, Mother, I want to be a Christian. Do let us stay?" said Fastrade eagerly.

But her mother shook her head sadly.

¹ LUKE 7:11-16

RETICENCE: *restraint*

OVERCHARGED: *overburdened*

"You forget Alaric," she said, "and that we may hear of him at Aix-la-Chapelle."

The sisters, however, heard of the wish, and before they went away the next morning, the superior wrote a letter to another convent in the city, recommending Fastrade and her mother to their community, and by Pepin's advice they went there immediately upon their arrival.

CHAPTER VI

THE SACRED GROVE

GODRITH journeyed with all speed back to his native village in Saxony. It was a desolate ruin now, for the houses had been burned, and the inhabitants slaughtered or taken prisoners. As Godrith looked around on the blackened walls and desolated fields, and remembered that all this had been wrought in the name of Christianity, he felt his heart grow hot and angry, until he remembered the kindness he had received in the forest during the last month, and reflected that none among his own people would have received an enemy as Pepin the Christian charcoal burner had received him.

Pepin's must be the true Christianity after all, he thought, for it accorded with what Pepin had told him concerning the love and goodness of the White Christ to all men, and had he not deliberately put his wife and daughter under the care of this White Christ and His followers while he came back to rescue his boy from his own priests and people. Together they had all kneeled down in the hut the night before, and the charcoal burner had implored the guidance and protection of God for each one of them, and had not his heart gone out with the words as he listened? Godrith thought of it all now in the midst of his anger, as he picked his way through the deserted village towards the sacred grove where his search for Alaric must begin.

This lay beyond the little township, on a hill that had formerly been enclosed by a strong palisading all round, but which had been torn down by Charlemagne's troops

the day they rescued Aldyth, the slave girl, from the priest's knife.

No attempt had been made to put it up since, and Godrith feared from this that his search here would be in vain. But he went on picking his way around the altar and through the grove of ash trees that surrounded it. In the fading light of evening the place looked grim and gaunt, and Godrith, as he recalled the scenes of wild feasting and revelry he had witnessed here, felt for the first time something akin to repulsion for his religion. There might be—there were—two sides to Christianity, the outward and visible, as represented by Charlemagne and his conquering troops, and the inner—the real, as taught by the White Christ, and shining in the lives of His followers, Pepin and his daughter, who could sacrifice her own comfort and pleasure, though it cost her a hard struggle and much pain, in order to help those who were not even

GAUNT: *barren*

REVELRY: *celebration*

her friends, but her enemies. None of his own people would have done as much for him as these strangers had done, and, after all, was Charlemagne so much to blame for wanting everybody to come under the sway of a religion that bore such beautiful fruits?

There was no such inner side to paganism. It was fierce and cruel through and through, and Godrith, as he made his way to the crest of the hill where the great altar stood that had often smoked with its human victims, thought of all this, and those he had known, slaves and foes alike, who had been slaughtered here.

But it was not to moralize on the difference between paganism and Christianity that Godrith had dared the horrors of this place; for it was growing dusk, and the White Christ could not be expected to protect him from the spirits, now that he was away from Pepin, and so he hastened to search among the huge stones that formed the altar and

lavers, in the hope of finding some trace of his boy. But nothing beyond the dead ashes of the sacred fire could be seen; and at last he retraced his steps with some haste to the village, for it was growing dark now.

But as he left the sacred grove, he was startled to see a little flame spring up among the dead black ruins of the village that had seemed quite deserted only a short time before. As he reflected that spirits did not light fires, he hurried forward in the hope of finding that some friend had returned like himself, and this hope was confirmed when he drew nearer and saw the figures of two men moving about. He shouted to them in his gladness, but instead of replying, they lifted themselves to look towards him, made the sign of the cross several times, and then broke into a loud wailing chant. This in its turn frightened Godrith almost as much as he had frightened the strangers, until he remembered Adalinda, and how she came to

him, singing a Christian hymn. He was encouraged to hope that these two were mortal men, and so he hastened forward, until he was challenged with the question, "Who art thou?"

"Godrith, the Saxon," he answered. "Who be ye, friends or foes?"

"Friends of all men, and servants of Christ," answered one. "My name is Willebad, from the far-off kingdom of Northumbria, and I come to bring the message of peace from the White Christ to my kindred in this land, for ye are kin to us, and the hearts of English monks are stirred that ye know Him not."

Godrith was silent for a minute or two, then he said, looking round at the ruin and desolation before him, "Is this the work of your White Christ?"

"Nay, nay," said the monk-missionary sadly, "this is the work of those who know little of the spirit of my Master."

"I believe it," said Godrith frankly, "for I too have seen something of what this faith is in those who truly believe; and if I can do aught to help you I will."

But Willebad shook his head.

"Alas! I am flying from this land," he said, "for the Saxons are even now mustering for another revolt, and many of my companions have already been murdered. But if I am spared, I may be able to return again, when ye will be ready to listen to the words of life."

But Godrith paid little heed to anything beyond the fact that his countrymen were again rallying to make another effort to throw off the foreign yoke, and he said eagerly, "Doth Wittekind and Albion counsel this?"

"The Saxon champions are even now arming for the fray," said the missionary sadly, for he could see that whatever Godrith might have learned concerning the truth of

Christianity, the love of freedom would bear down all considerations of religion, and he would hasten to join the insurgents.

But whatever might be Godrith's after-course, the duty of the missionary monks lay clear before them, and they were not the men to shirk it. Their visitor was invited to share the contents of their wallets, and when the evening meal was concluded, they joined in prayer and singing, and then proceeded to give Godrith some instruction before they lay down under the shelter of one of the ruined houses, to rest for the night.

The next morning they all awoke at dawn, and Godrith was easily persuaded to join them in their morning prayers, before setting out on his journey to Ehresburgh, where he expected to find his countrymen gathered. Round this, the strongest fortress possessed by the Saxons, had raged the fiercest strife. In the first campaign the French had taken it and destroyed the

SHIRK: *avoid*

WALLETS: *knapsacks*

national idol, Irmensul, a column supposed to commemorate the defeat of the Roman legions by their great chieftain, Hermann. But Charlemagne had no sooner left the country than the garrison remaining behind in the castle was surprised and driven across the border, and the Saxons once more established themselves in their ancient fortress. Then it was taken again, and again retaken; and so it had been passed from one to the other, neither side holding it very long, yet ever struggling for its possession.

Once again it had passed into the hands of the Saxons, who with their hero, Wittekind, at their head, were burning to renew the conflict with hereditary foes. The missionary monk Willebad had barely escaped with his life from this horde of half-savage Saxons, and he scarcely knew whether he had done right when he saw how eager Godrith was to join them.

It was not alone the love of battling for

HEREDITARY FOES: *enemies passed down through the generations*

freedom and his country that made Godrith so eager to reach Ehresburgh, but he hoped and believed that here he should gain some tidings of Alaric. The priests were somewhere in the neighborhood of the fortress he had little doubt, for it was they who so constantly stirred up resistance alike to Charlemagne and Christianity. So Godrith pushed forward with all speed to the well-known trysting-place, and before he got there the monks' account was amply confirmed by the groups he met with on the road, journeying to the same place.

It was the old story. The Franks had gone home, leaving a few men to garrison the fortress, and Wittekind had appeared at the head of a band of men from the forest and wilds of Scandinavia, and had summoned all Saxons to serve under his banner. But Godrith resolved to make a bargain with the hero chieftain, before taking service under him this time. He was doubtless

in communication with the priests, and through him he would be able to obtain possession of Alaric.

This, then, should be the price of his service. He would serve under the standard of Wittekind until the Franks were defeated and Westphalia free, if the priests on their part would promise that Alaric should be kept in safety and delivered over to him at the end of the war. It greatly cheered him when he met a friend just before reaching Ehresburgh, who told him that he had seen Alaric only the day before; that the child was well, and, as he had supposed, in the care of the priests. A young priest had told him that they had intended to capture Fastrade, and Adalinda too, but that they had left the forest too soon for them to carry out their plans entirely.

Godrith could not but feel thankful that his wife and daughter had escaped, and yet he could not but wonder at himself for his trust in Pepin. To no other man would he

have given up the charge of wife and child, but he felt sure they were safe with him. Ever since he had overheard the conversation between Adalinda and her father, he had recognized that there was a difference between Pepin and any other man he had ever known, and the secret of it was that he lived not only outwardly, but regulated his whole life by a law that bade him do to others as the Lord Christ commanded.

This conversation, and the hardship Adalinda felt it imposed upon her, and yet which she had so loyally obeyed, had often been thought of by Godrith, and was the secret of his implicit trust in Pepin, so that now he felt himself free to make any bargain he could for the release of Alaric, well-knowing that wife and daughter would be taken care of in the meantime.

As soon as Ehresburgh was reached, Godrith sought an introduction with Wittekind, and told his story, and the proposal he had come to make for the rescue of his son.

The chieftain frowned when he heard how the priests were mixed up with it, for they were at once his helpers and masters, and he knew not how they might receive his demand to deliver up one whom they considered they had a right to hold. He knew nothing of the arts of diplomacy—men of action seldom do; but having made up his mind to secure the services of Godrith at all costs, he sent at once for the child, and told the priests he should hold them responsible for his safety, as he had promised that he should be restored to his father.

It suited the priests just now to bow to Wittekind, for how was their power to be upheld if he did not throw off the yoke of Charlemagne? So they readily promised to do as he wished, but had no intention of keeping the promise when the time came for its fulfillment.

CHAPTER VII

THE SAXON CHIEFTAIN

WHEN Godrith made his bargain with Wittekind, he thought that a few months at the most would see the end of the war, and then he could claim his boy, and fetch his wife and Fastrade from Aix-la-Chapelle, for the attack they meditated was cleverly conceived, and skillfully carried out.

Charlemagne had left two of his most trusted lieutenants in command of the Saxon fortresses, and under them was the flower of the Frankish army. A battle was fought on the banks of the Weser, in which every noble Frank was killed, and only a few common soldiers escaped to carry the dire news to the king. But no sooner did he hear of it,

WESER RIVER: *a small river running through Saxony and emptying into the North Sea*

than he summoned his troops together and despite the approach of winter, marched to Saxony, before the victors had time to prepare for his coming.

Wittekind, with a few of his personal friends, had gone to ask help from the Northmen in case it should be needed, when Godrith heard from a monk whom he had concealed from the fury of his countrymen, that Charlemagne had summoned an army and was marching on towards Verden, resolved to exact vengeance for the late defeat.

There was no time for resistance now, and he hastened to spread the news and carry it on to their leaders, who must seek refuge for themselves, and their few followers among the Northmen.

It was with a sad, desponding heart that Godrith tramped through the desolated fields and villages. Autumn rains had set in, making everything look more bleak and

woebegone than ever, and now his hope of rescuing his child had well-nigh faded out of existence, for nothing seemed to quench the ardor of Charlemagne, and there seemed little chance of the war between the two nations coming to an end.

Everywhere along the route he told the news, hoping that the priests would hear it, and escape, carrying with them his son. This hope, at least, was not disappointed.

The peaceful portion of the population thought they might fairly trust to Charlemagne's clemency, but there would be no mercy shown to the priests who were the most active agents in stirring up the revolt, and they knew it.

Without a moment's delay, they hastened to join Wittekind, so that the day after Godrith reached the territory of the Northmen, there entered, in solemn procession, a train of white-robed priests, carrying the few sacred instruments used in their worship,

ARDOR: *passion*

CLEMENCY: *mercy*

and bearing aloft branches of ash and oak. Behind them came the neophytes preparing for the priesthood, and one of them had little Alaric by the hand.



His father was among the crowd of spectators who lined the road, and at once recognized his son; but Alaric had looked so often in vain for his father that now he did not see him, although Godrith tried to attract his attention.

It was as well, perhaps, that he had failed to do this, or Alaric might have been taken at once into strict seclusion; but, as it

STRICT SECLUSION: *complete hiding*

was, Godrith soon learned that he had a considerable amount of liberty, and was not unkindly treated.

The priests were greatly impressed, it seemed, with this last proof of the energy and determination of Charlemagne, and by no means disposed to rouse his anger unnecessarily by any more sacrifices of human victims just now; and so Godrith felt that his boy was safe for the present; and Wittekind promised that he should be delivered up to his care by and by, even though the war with France should not cease yet awhile.

The father was very grateful for this promise, and in proof of it volunteered to perform any service the chieftain might direct, however difficult it might be.

Wittekind looked at him keenly as he made the offer, "Wilt thou go back, and learn what thou canst of the enemy's movements?" he said.

It was indeed a difficult and dangerous task, but Godrith did not hesitate.

"I will go," he said, promptly, "and you will deliver my son to me when I return?"

"I will," replied Wittekind, "My life for his. Ye hear, priests?" he said, turning to those who were about him, and then thinking, perhaps, that Godrith would perform his errand with more zeal if he knew the child was in his keeping, he said, "He shall be brought here tomorrow, and I will teach him something of the art of war—how to set an arrow, to bring down a bird; and do you use all dispatch, Godrith, and bring us word again what the great king is doing."

Godrith was absent nearly a fortnight, for the weather was bad, and the roads in some parts nothing but a morass, so that a long detour had to be made. Then, soon after he crossed the borders he began to fall in with detachments of French soldiers, from whom he was obliged to conceal himself, for their

DISPATCH: *speed*

A FORTNIGHT: *two weeks*

MORASS: *marsh or bog*

very presence here foreshadowed disaster, and convinced Godrith of the need of caution.

But whatever his forebodings were, they fell far short of the awful reality, the news of which he heard before he reached Verden, where it happened. In fact, Godrith did not believe the story that was brought to him by a man who said he had escaped from Verden, almost mad with horror.

It seemed that when Charlemagne reached the town, he summoned to his presence all the chieftains of the Saxons, and demanded of them who had been the promoters of the revolt. All told the same story, that Wittekind had placed himself at their head, but that he was with the Northmen now. The escape of this redoubtable foe put Charlemagne into a fury, and he ordered that everyone who had taken any part in the late rising should be beheaded on the bank of the river Aller. In vain his councillors

REDOUBTABLE: *fearsome*

ALLER RIVER: *a tributary joining the Weser River at Verden*

pleaded moderation—that the numbers involved would make it no less than a wholesale, cold-blooded butchery. Charlemagne was obdurate, and 4,500 brave Saxons were beheaded; so that the river ran red with their blood for no crime save that they loved their country and their religion.

Little wonder was it that the Saxons hated Christianity when such deeds as this were done in its name, and well might the monk-missionaries pray to be delivered from such friends as this great French king. It is doubtful whether Charlemagne knew much more of the inner, gentle life of true Christianity than the savage Saxons, whom he was trying to convert; but he had made up his mind to convert or exterminate them, as the ruthless Saracens had done to the nations they had overrun. The example of their success had probably suggested the plan to Charlemagne, who was too impatient to wait for the slow, but sure, and righteous

OBDURATE: *unyielding*

SARACENS: *Arabians*

methods adopted by the missionaries.

Slowly and painfully Godrith crept back with the news of the slaughter on the Aller. All too surely had it been confirmed to leave any doubt of its truth now, and the sorrow of Wittekind would be great indeed when he heard the evil tidings.

He almost forgot that Alaric was to be given up to him when he reached the camp, for his personal joy and triumph was swallowed up in the national sorrow and disaster. He felt angry, too, that the deed had been done in the name of Christianity, for he knew now that the White Christ denounced such cruelty, and he had made up his mind to tell his countrymen something of what he had seen and learned in the forest from Adalinda and her father.

It was not the custom of the Saxons to give any loud expression to their emotions, but deep, though silent, was the grief that fell on the camp when Godrith told the news

of the massacre of Verden, and every hero among them vowed to avenge the death of his countrymen.

For the next three years the two opposing powers might be compared to wild beasts, ever on the watch to take the other at a disadvantage and spring. Wittekind, with his little band of followers, would cross the border and harry some Frankish fortress, and, before the garrison could rally, the Saxons were back again to their camp.

At last Charlemagne resolved to make Ehresburgh his residence, for a time at least, and sent for his wife and children, and ordered that his twelve paladins or knights, with their families, should also make it their home. So long trains of baggage mules, with servants and attendants, began to arrive at Ehresburgh early in the spring of 785, and Godrith heard that the queen had brought several Saxon women in her train from Aix-la-Chapelle.

HARRY: *attack*

His thoughts instantly flew to his own wife, for he knew she would embrace the first opportunity that offered, to come in search of him and Alaric, and it was very tantalizing to think that she *might* be so near, and yet so utterly beyond his reach, for Wittekind's camp was still across the border, and Charlemagne had strengthened his fortresses all along the line of communication between the two countries.

Strange to say Godrith had become a Christian in heart, though not in outward profession, since he had left the forest, for the example of Adalinda and her father, but more especially that of the little girl who had so bravely conquered herself, made a deep impression upon his mind, and he longed to know whether it had had a similar effect upon his wife. He often talked to his boy about the White Christ, and how he had taken care of them in the forest, and was still caring for his mother and sister. He was

not sure that he had any right to claim such protection for himself, for he was still ignorant of many things that the youngest child knows about God now, and among them was this truth, that He is the King of all the earth and all people.

Now Godrith could not believe in the White Christ being the God of the Saxons while they professed paganism, and no doubt this idea was very prevalent among those who professed to know better—Charlemagne and his soldiers. Otherwise they would not have been so eager to baptize whole conquered armies as they were, but with the underlying thought that if they could once break down the power of paganism and get the nation openly, though superficially, to profess Christianity, *then* God would take them in hand and become the God of the Saxon as well as the Frank. We can understand much of what they did to be perfectly reasonable, and not quite so

blameworthy as it would be if they had been less ignorant.

The monk-missionaries shared this mistake to a certain extent, but they were not content with a mere outward profession of faith in Christ and many, like the Northumbrian monk, Willebad, were ready to lay down their lives to get at the hearts of these people, and influence them, as Godrith had been, by the example of Adalinda. Doubtless they did do this, too, although to outward seeming their work was all in vain. For when they had gathered a little congregation together, down swooped a band of savage Saxons, urged on by the priests, and the missionary was either killed or driven away, and the little band of Christians scattered.

But the Divine seed sown in their hearts was not lost, for they carried it like the birds of the air, and in the most unlikely places it fell and grew and blossomed and brought forth fruit. Here in the camp of Wittekind,

the last stronghold of the pagans, Godrith discovered a man who had been baptized, and had learned much from the English monk before he had been driven away, and when he found out his companion's leaning towards Christianity, the two often talked over the subject together, and Godrith learned many things from him.

Another thing Godrith discovered, and that was that Wittekind was growing tired of the domineering tyranny of the priests. They were constantly urging him, with reproaches and sneers, to make some futile attack upon the Franks that the chieftain's judgment told him could only end in the defeat and slaughter of his heroes; and he was growing careful of their lives now, and among all those who surrounded him, none was so favored as Godrith.

This afforded him the opportunity of dropping many a hint about Christianity being a better religion than paganism,

until at last Wittekind and his companion Albion had heard all the story about his stay in the forest, and how Adalinda had given up her own comfort and pleasure because it was the will of the White Christ that she should help the poor and needy. Such a tale as this was sure to charm and interest one who had been brought up as these Saxons had been, for it was in such direct opposition to all the selfish maxims inculcated by their own faith that they could not but think of the difference thus presented. Wittekind, too, had plenty of time to think just now, for there was little else to do, cooped up in this camp among the Northmen. Bitterly did he chafe and fret against the inaction thus imposed upon him. Wrestling matches, flinging great stones, and other trials of strength soon palled when there was nothing else to do, and so Godrith's story of his life in the forest and how he had mistaken Adalinda for Scyld, the hero-child, and how she had

MAXIMS: *ways of life*

INCULCATED: *taught with frequent repetition*

PALLED: *grew tiresome*

proved herself one afterwards, came as a relief to the monotony of the spring days; and, before they were aware of it, the two chieftains were inwardly longing to know more of this White Christ who taught such wonderful doctrines.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

NOW we must go back a little way in our story, to see how Fastrade and her mother fared.

The superior of the convent at Aix-la-Chapelle received the strangers most kindly, and the poor storm-tossed worn woman thought she should never want to leave such a haven of rest as she had found here; and yet the community of nuns was by no means an idle one, for there were no busier women in Aix-la-Chapelle than these sisters. They were not secluded from the world and its busy life, as they were later on, but freely mingled among the homes, helping many a weary mother to bear her burden of sorrow and privation; nursing the sick, visiting

PRIVATION: *lack of comforts and necessities*

the prisoners brought back by the soldiers after the war, and teaching in the convent schools.

Then the court of Charlemagne was but a larger home, almost as simple in its life, for the great king sat down with his boys and girls to learn lessons in reading and writing, astronomy, and grammar, from the learned English monk, Alcuin, who was their preceptor. This "School of the Palace," as it was called, the king desired to make a model school, that all convents should have one after its pattern, and so the nuns and monks were invited to come and share in the instruction given to the royal family. Those living in Aix-la-Chapelle often availed themselves of the opportunity thus afforded; and so it came to pass that the queen heard of the strangers brought by the charcoal burner to the convent, and being in want of a nurse for her baby just then, she asked if the woman would come and take care of it.



THE "SCHOOL OF THE PALACE"

Now Fastrade was by no means tired of convent life, for she was busy learning to read in the school, and afterwards helping the sisters in the preparation of herbs for medicine; but her mother could settle down to no employment the house afforded. Having recovered from the weariness and fatigue that had so long oppressed her, the quiet of the house that had before been so restful,

now grew irksome, and when she heard that she might become nurse to the queen's baby she eagerly accepted the offer. She would have some chance of hearing news of her husband and son while with the queen, she thought, for this was the secret of her restlessness; she was pining for tidings of them. So Fastrade was left at the convent school with Adalinda, while her mother went to live at the palace. Pepin had also obtained some employment under the chamberlain, and these two were still attached to the Court, when the order came from the king that they should all journey to Ehresburgh for the summer.

At first it was decided that the two girls should be left at the convent in the care of the nuns, but Pepin could not bear the thought of being separated from Adalinda, while Fastrade was, of course, eager to join her mother now that she was about to return to her native land; and so in the end they were included in the Court retinue, and

COURT RETINUE: *group of attendants for the Court*

went with the rest of the servants to Ehresburgh.

Charlemagne and his paladins had already established themselves in the town, and the castle had been prepared for the reception of the queen and her suite. She was a Saxon lady by birth, Charlemagne's third wife, and the daughter of Count Undolph, so that it was no unwelcome change for her to return to her own nation for a time. She was not a good woman, and seems to have been as fierce and cruel as most of her race, but she had grown attached to the nurse, who was so devoted to her baby, and would do almost anything to please her.

Of course, they knew all about Wittekind's camp by this time, and Fastrade often said to Adalinda that she was sure her father was among the heathen rebels, and that her mother feared it too. Soon after they reached Ehresburgh, it was whispered about the Court that something was to be done, either to convert or exterminate this

SUITE: *attendants*

last handful of the once powerful Saxon army, and the paladins were for the exterminating policy. But the queen's nurse went to her mistress when she heard the news, and falling on her knees, implored her to beg the king to send messengers with offers of peace first, and for once the queen's influence was exerted on the side of mercy.

Charlemagne was quite willing to try pacific measures to win over his redoubtable foe, and an *envoy* was dispatched to the camp, across the Elbe, inviting Wittekind and Albion to visit the king.

The astonishment this caused among the little band of heroes could only be equaled by the suspicion with which it was viewed, and the priests counseled that the messenger should be dismissed with scorn. But Godrith implored his master not to act hastily in the matter; while he should not trust too implicitly to the word of a man who could commit the atrocities of Verden. So the messengers were kept waiting some little

PACIFIC: *peaceful*

ENVOY: *messenger*

time, while council after council was held, considering the message of Charlemagne. At length it was decided that Wittekind and Albion should accept the invitation, if the king would agree to an exchange of hostages, and send them a safe conduct in writing, by which they would be allowed to return in peace to the Northmen, when the visit was over; and Godrith offered himself and his son, as hostages on the side of the Saxons.

This arrangement was so far accepted by the messengers that Godrith and Alaric went back with them, the *envoys* pledging themselves to bring back the other two hostages, and a safe conduct from the king.

Never were there more willing prisoners than Alaric and his father, for they had learned that their dear ones were safe, and formed part of the queen's household, and they were far more eager to reach the place of their captivity than the messengers were. At length they reached Ehresburgh, and as

hostages they were taken to the strongest part of the fortress and locked up, while the *envoys* went to tell the king how they had sped on their errand; not forgetting to relate the eagerness of the prisoners to reach the place of captivity.

Charlemagne was amused, and so well pleased at Godrith's faith in him, that he commanded him to be released at once, and brought into his presence.

"How now, bold Saxon?" he exclaimed, as with a slight inclination of the head, Godrith stood before him, holding Alaric by the hand.

"May it please you, great king, we come as hostages from brave Wittekind and Albion, our chiefs," said Godrith.

"And ye were not afraid to trust yourselves to me?" said the king.

"Nay, great king, you have held hostages of me for these three years past. My wife and child are with you now," said Godrith.

“Read me this riddle, bold Saxon,” said Charlemagne, “and tell me the name of thy wife and child.”

So once again the story of their life in the forest, and the part Adalinda had played in it, had to be told, and the king was delighted to hear that Godrith was ready to be baptized, and that the two great chiefs were already favorably disposed towards Christianity.

“Then we shall convert them, and they shall come to our court!” he exclaimed, and, dismissing his paladins who stood round him, he took his prisoner to the queen’s apartments, to whom he related Godrith’s story.

But she had heard it all before from her baby’s nurse; and so as soon as the recital was fairly ended, she sent for Fastrade and her mother.

We will pass over the meeting between the long-separated husband and wife, and brother and sister. The latter did not

recognize each other very quickly. Of course, Fastrade had talked and thought often of her brother, and Alaric had a faint recollection of his sister—but not the sister that came to greet him now. Three years had made some difference in Alaric, but it had wrought a far greater change in Fastrade, for it had been passed in an altogether new world, and under such conditions as could not fail to modify her character. Not only had she grown tall and older-looking, but her contact with the sisters of the convent, and the refining influence of the education she had received, and the religion she had adopted, had so altered her, that even her father had felt the undefinable change. She was stately and womanly at the same time, and there was a gentleness in her bearing, altogether different from the ordinary rude, rough Saxon girl, that quite charmed Godrith, and gave him a better opinion of the civilization and learning that Charlemagne was so anxious to establish.

He soon learned that Fastrade had been baptized, and that in her case it was no mere outward profession of a new faith, but like her dear friend and foster-sister, Adalinda, she was striving to follow in the footsteps of the Lord Christ, who loved her and gave Himself for her.

His wife had not had the courage to do this, though frequently urged to take the important step by her friends. The subjection of Saxon wives to the will of their husbands in all things forbade the formal adoption of a new religion, whatever influence it might have on the heart and life. That she was a Christian at heart, no one doubted who knew her, and her joy when she knew that, so far from withholding his consent, her husband was anxious to be baptized with her, may be better imagined than described.

Meanwhile, hostages had been sent to the camp of Wittekind, and he and his companion, Albion, were daily expected to reach Ehresburgh. Guards had been posted along

the road they were to travel, in order to give notice of their approach, that the king and his paladins might be in readiness to receive him with due honor.

In his everyday domestic life, Charlemagne was as simple in his tastes as any plain citizen; but on such occasions as these, no one could be more graceful in courtesy or more dignified in bearing. When he rode forth surrounded by his knights on their elegantly caparisoned horses, to meet the rough, shaggy-looking Saxon heroes, no wonder they were charmed; for Charlemagne, alighting, embraced them each in turn, welcoming them as brothers.

At Ehresburgh they were received with every demonstration of respect from the Frankish troops, and, although they received all this with some suspicion at first, they soon became convinced of its genuine character, after seeing Godrith and hearing his account of his wife and child being restored to him.

He told them, too, of his intention to be baptized with his wife at the castle church the next Sunday, but was by no means prepared to hear the news that these chieftains likewise contemplated taking the same step, and formally renouncing paganism.

“Why should you be so surprised, Godrith?” said Wittekind; “it is your own work. What did you tell us of this Christianity in the camp?”

The news that Wittekind and Albion were about to forsake paganism and embrace the Christian faith was a source of great rejoicing to the king and all the court, but to none did it bring more heartfelt thanksgiving than to Fastrade.

Perhaps no one but Adalinda knew the secret burden the poor girl had carried the last three years—a burden of guilt for her deceit in concealing how she had first seen the magic runes.

From that had sprung all the sorrow and separation they had had to endure, she

used to argue. But for that, her father and Alaric might have been with them in Aix-la-Chapelle, learning the truths of the Gospel from the learned English monk, Alcuin. But for her deceit, he might now be a baptized Christian instead of a worshiper of Woden still, as he doubtless was, and thinking thus, it was hard to believe that even the precious blood of Christ could wash away such sin as hers.

But although she scarcely dared to hope, she never ceased to pray for her father, and to hear how abundantly these prayers had been answered was joy indeed. Now she could believe that the God she worshiped was the King of all the earth and of all men, for He had overruled even her wrongdoing, making it a "stepping-stone to higher things" for herself. For it was this that convinced her of her need of a change of heart and life—her need of a Savior, who could and would save her from her sins; while to others whom she feared had been kept in darkness through

her fault, God had revealed Himself, making them His messengers in turn. Now indeed, she could feel that her sins had been forgiven, for through the grace of God, and the life of Christ in her, she had been gradually outgrowing them; and so the blood of Christ was cleansing her from all sin.

There were grand preparations for the reception of two such noble converts as Wittekind and Albion into the Christian church. They were not to be baptized at Ehresburgh, but at Antigny, for during their stay at the former place the time was so occupied with festivities that there was little leisure left for quiet instruction, which they desired to receive, and which Godrith told them was all-important, as the mere rite of baptism availed nothing without a corresponding change of heart and life.

The king did not urge this view of the matter upon their notice. It was enough for him that they were willing to stoop their proud necks; he cared little whether their

hearts were bowed with true penitence or not; but we have good grounds for believing that these two noble Saxons were really and truly converted, for we hear no more of them stirring up strife between the two nations, and for eight years at least there was peace between them.

Wittekind and Albion were baptized at Antigny-Sur-Aisne in June, 785, and with them a large number of their followers, to the great indignation of the pagan priests, who little guessed that this result had been brought about indirectly by the magic runes, which they thought would bring only evil to Godrith and his children.

THE END

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Emma Leslie (1837-1909), whose actual name was Emma Dixon, lived in Lewisham, Kent, in the south of England. She was a prolific Victorian children's author who wrote over 100 books. Emma Leslie's first book, *The Two Orphans*, was published in 1863 and her books remained in print for years after her death. She is buried at the St. Mary's Parish Church, in Pwllcrochan, Pembroke, South Wales.

Emma Leslie brought a strong Christian emphasis into her writing and many of her books were published by the Religious Tract Society. Her extensive historical fiction works covered many important periods in church history. Her writing also included a short booklet on the life of Queen Victoria published in the 50th year of the Queen's reign.

More Church History for Younger Readers

SOLDIER FRITZ

A Story of the Reformation

by Emma Leslie

Illustrated by C. A. Ferrier



Young Fritz wants to follow in the footsteps of Martin Luther and be a soldier for the Lord, so he chooses a Bible from the peddler's pack as his birthday gift. When his father, the Count, goes off to war, however, Fritz and his mother and little sister are forced to flee into the forest to escape being thrown in prison for their new faith. Disguising themselves as commoners, they must trust the Lord as they wait and hope for the Count to rescue them. But how will he ever be able to find them?

More Church History for Younger Readers

THROUGH STRESS AND STRAIN

A Story of the Huguenot Persecution

by Emma Leslie

Illustrated by C. A. Ferrier & J. F. W.



These are difficult times for the Huguenots in France when Jules Marot comes to visit his brother's family and brings bad news about their young son, Jacques. Huguenot schools and churches are being torn down and these faithful Christians are forbidden to gather for services. The Marot family watches in dismay as many families who were once fervent in the faith give in to the pressure to convert to the "king's religion." As the persecution intensifies, can the whole Marot family, including their sons, Jacques and François, learn to trust God more than ever before?

EMMA LESLIE CHURCH HISTORY SERIES



GLAUCIA THE GREEK SLAVE

A Tale of Athens in the First Century

After the death of her father, Glaucia is sold to a wealthy Roman family to pay his debts. She tries hard to adjust to her new life but longs to find a God who can love even a slave. Meanwhile, her brother, Laon, struggles to find her and to earn enough money to buy her freedom. But what is the mystery that surrounds their mother's disappearance years earlier and will they ever be able to read the message in the parchments she left for them?

THE CAPTIVES

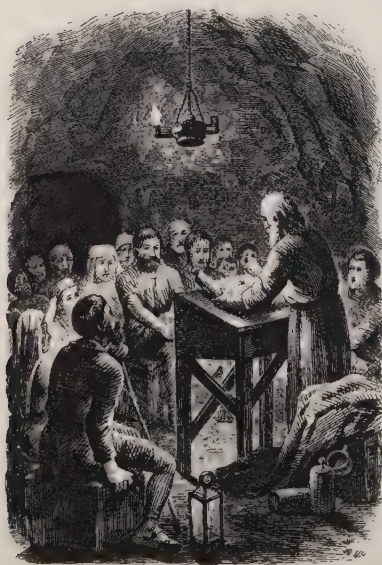
Or, Escape from the Druid Council

The Druid priests are as cold and cruel as the forest spirits they claim to represent, and Guntra, the chief of her tribe of Britons, must make a desperate deal with them to protect those she loves. Unaware of Guntra's struggles, Jugurtha, her son, longs to drive the hated Roman conquerors from the land. When he encounters the Christian centurion, Marcinius, Jugurtha mocks the idea of a God of love and kindness, but there comes a day when he is in need of love and kindness for himself and his beloved little sister. Will he allow Marcinius to help him? And will the gospel of Jesus Christ ever penetrate the brutal religion of the proud Britons?

EMMA LESLIE CHURCH HISTORY SERIES

OUT OF THE MOUTH OF THE LION

Or, The Church in the Catacombs



When Flaminius, a high Roman official, takes his wife, Flavia, to the Colosseum to see Christians thrown to the lions, he has no idea the effect it will have. Flavia cannot forget the faith of the martyrs, and finally, to protect her from complete disgrace or even danger, Flaminius requests a transfer to a more remote government post. As he and his family travel to the seven cities of Asia Minor mentioned in Revelation, he sees the various responses of the churches to persecution. His attitude toward the despised

Christians begins to change, but does he dare forsake the gods of Rome and embrace the Lord Jesus Christ?

SOWING BESIDE ALL WATERS

A Tale of the World in the Church

There is newfound freedom from persecution for Christians under the emperor, Constantine, but newfound troubles as well. Errors and pagan ways are creeping into the Church, while many of the most devoted Christians are withdrawing from the world into the desert as hermits and nuns. Quadratus, one of the emperor's special guards, is concerned over these developments, even in his own family. Then a riot sweeps through the city and Quadratus' home is ransacked. When he regains consciousness, he finds that his sister, Placidia, is gone. Where is she? And can the Church handle the new freedom, and remain faithful?

EMMA LESLIE CHURCH HISTORY SERIES

FROM BONDAGE TO FREEDOM

A Tale of the Times of Mohammed

At a Syrian market two Christian women are sold as slaves. One of the slaves ends up in Rome where Bishop Gregory is teaching his new doctrine of “purgatory” and the need for Christians to finish paying for their own sins. The other slave travels with her new master, Mohammed, back to Arabia, where Mohammed eventually declares himself to be the prophet of God. In Rome and Arabia, the two women and countless others fall into the bondage of man-made religions—will they learn at last to find true freedom in the Lord Jesus Christ alone?

THE MARTYR’S VICTORY

A Story of Danish England

Knowing full well they may die in the attempt, a small band of monks sets out to convert the savage Danes who have laid waste to the surrounding countryside year after year. The monks’ faith is sorely tested as they face opposition from the angry Priest of Odin as well as doubts, sickness and starvation, but their leader, Osric, is unwavering in his attempts to share the “White Christ” with those who reject Him. Then the monks discover a young Christian woman who has escaped being sacrificed to the Danish gods—can she help reach those who had enslaved her and tried to kill her?

GYTHA’S MESSAGE

A Tale of Saxon England

Having discovered God’s love for her, Gytha, a young slave, longs to escape the violence and cruelty of the world and devote herself to learning more about this God of love. Instead she lives in a Saxon household that despises the name of Christ. Her simple faith and devoted service bring hope and purpose to those around her, especially during the dark days when England is defeated by William the Conqueror. Through all of her trials, can Gytha learn to trust that God often has greater work for us to do *in* the world than *out* of it?

EMMA LESLIE CHURCH HISTORY SERIES

LEOFWINE THE MONK

Or, The Curse of the Ericsons

A Story of a Saxon Family

Leofwine, unlike his wild, younger brother, finds no pleasure in terrorizing the countryside, and longs to enter a monastery. Shortly after he does, however, he hears strange rumors of a monk who preaches “heresy”. Unable to stop thinking about these new ideas, Leofwine at last determines to leave the monastery and England. Leofwine’s search for inner peace takes him to France and Rome and finally to Jerusalem, but in his travels, he uncovers a plot against his beloved country. Will he be able to help save England? And will he ever find true rest for his troubled soul?

ELFREDA THE SAXON

Or, The Orphan of Jerusalem

A Sequel to Leofwine

When Jerusalem is captured by the Muslims, Elfreda, a young orphan, is sent back to England to her mother’s sister. Her aunt is not at all pleased to see her, and her uncle fears she may have brought the family curse back to England. Elfreda’s cousin, Guy, who is joining King Richard’s Crusade, promises Elfreda that he will win such honor as a crusader that the curse will be removed. Over the years that follow, however, severe trials befall the family and Guy and Elfreda despair of the curse ever being lifted. Is it possible that there is One with power stronger than any curse?

DEARER THAN LIFE

A Story of the Times of Wycliffe

When a neighboring monastery lays claim to one of his fields, Sir Hugh Middleton refuses to yield his property, and further offends the monastery by sending his younger son, Stephen, to study under Dr. John Wycliffe. At the same time, Sir Hugh sends his elder son, Harry, to serve as an attendant to the powerful Duke of Lancaster. As Wycliffe seeks to share the Word of God with the common people, Stephen and Harry and their sisters help spread the truth, but what will it cost them in the dangerous day in which they live?

EMMA LESLIE CHURCH HISTORY SERIES

BEFORE THE DAWN

A Tale of Wycliffe and Huss

To please her crippled grandson, Conrad, Dame Ursula allows a kindly blacksmith and his friend, Ned Trueman, to visit the boy. Soon, however, she becomes suspicious that the men belong to the despised group who are followers of Dr. John Wycliffe, and she passionately warns Conrad of the dangers of evil “heresy”. He decides to become a famous teacher in the Church so he can combat heresy, but he wonders why all the remedies of the Church fail to cure him. And why do his mother and grandmother refuse to speak of the father he has never known?



FAITHFUL, BUT NOT FAMOUS

A Tale of the French Reformation

Young Claude Leclerc travels to Paris to begin his training for the priesthood, but he is not sure *what* he believes about God. One day he learns the words to an old hymn and is drawn to the lines about “David’s Royal Fountain” that will “purge every sin away.” Claude yearns to find this fountain, and at last dares to ask the famous Dr. Lefèvre where he can find it. His question leads Dr. Lefèvre to set aside his study of the saints and study the Scriptures in earnest. As Dr. Lefèvre grasps the wonderful truth of salvation by grace, he wants to share it with Claude, but Claude has mysteriously disappeared. Where is he? And is France truly ready to receive the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Additional Titles Available From
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DOWN THE SNOW STAIRS

Or, From Goodnight to Goodmorning

by Alice Corkran

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On Christmas Eve, eight-year-old Kitty cannot sleep, knowing that her beloved little brother is critically ill due to her own disobedience. Traveling in a dream to Naughty Children Land, she meets many strange people, including Daddy Coax and Lady Love. Kitty longs to return to the Path of Obedience but can she resist the many temptations she faces? Will she find her way home in time for Christmas? An imaginative and delightful read-aloud for the whole family!

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In the days of Robin Hood, a young boy named Robin is journeying through Sherwood Forest when suddenly the company is surrounded by men in green. Deserted in the commotion by an unfaithful servant, Robin finds himself alone in the forest. After a miserable night, Robin is found by Little John. Robin is treated kindly by Robin Hood, Maid Marian and the Merry Men, but how long must he wait for his father, the Sheriff of Nottingham, to come to take him home?

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by Clara Ingram Judson

Illustrated by Francis White

In this story, the second book in the Mary Jane series, five-year-old Mary Jane has more happy, wholesome adventures, this time at her great-grandparents' farm in the country where she hunts for eggs, picks berries, finds baby rabbits, goes to the circus and more!

Historical Fiction for Younger Readers

AMERICAN TWINS OF THE REVOLUTION

by Lucy Fitch Perkins

General Washington has no money to pay his discouraged troops and twins Sally and Roger are asked by their father, General Priestly, to help hide a shipment of gold which will be used to pay the American soldiers. Unfortunately, British spies have also learned about the gold and will stop at nothing to prevent it from reaching General Washington. Based on a true story, this is a thrilling episode from our nation's history!

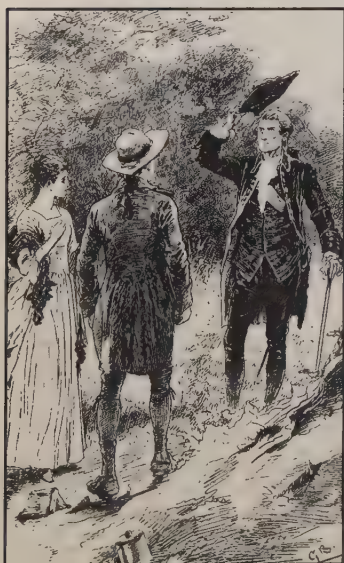


MARIE'S HOME

Or, A Glimpse of the Past

by Caroline Austin

Illustrated by Gordon Browne R. I.



Eleven-year-old Marie Hamilton and her family travel to France at the invitation of Louis XVI, just before the start of the French Revolution. There they encounter the tremendous disparity between the proud French Nobility and the oppressed and starving French people. When an enraged mob storms the palace of Versailles, Marie and her family are rescued from grave danger by a strange twist of events, but Marie's story of courage, self-sacrifice and true nobility is not yet over! Honor, duty, compassion and forgiveness are all portrayed in this uplifting story.

Historical Fiction by William W. Canfield

THE WHITE SENECA

Illustrated by G. A. Harker

Captured by the Senecas, fifteen-year-old Henry Cochrane grows to love the Indian ways and becomes Dundiswa—the White Seneca. When Henry is captured by an enemy tribe, however, he must make a desperate attempt to escape from them and rescue fellow captive, Constance Leonard. He will need all the skills he has learned from the Indians, as well as great courage and determination, if he is to succeed. But what will happen to the young woman if they do reach safety? And will he ever be able to return to his own people?

AT SENECA CASTLE

Illustrated by G. A. Harker

In this sequel to *The White Seneca*, Henry Cochrane, now eighteen, faces many perils as he serves as a scout for the Continental Army. General Washington is determined to do whatever it takes to stop the constant Indian attacks on the settlers and yet Henry is torn between his love for the Senecas and his loyalty to his own people. As the Army advances across New York State, Henry receives permission to travel ahead and warn his Indian friends of the coming destruction. But will he reach them in time? And what has happened to the beautiful Constance Leonard whom he had been forced to leave in captivity a year earlier?

THE SIGN ABOVE THE DOOR

Young Prince Martiesen is ruler of the land of Goshen in Egypt, where the Hebrews live. Eight plagues have already come upon Egypt and now Martiesen has been forced by Pharaoh to further increase the burden of the Hebrews. Martiesen, however, is in love with the beautiful Hebrew maiden, Elisheba, whom he is forbidden by Egyptian law to marry. As the nation despairs, the other nobles turn to Martiesen for leadership, but before he can decide what to do, Elisheba is kidnapped by the evil Peshala and terrifying darkness falls over the land. An exciting tale woven around the events of the Exodus from the Egyptian perspective!

Adventure by George Manville Fenn

YUSSUF THE GUIDE

*Being the Strange Story of the Travels in Asia Minor of
Burne the Lawyer, Preston the Professor, and
Lawrence the Sick*

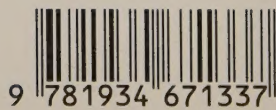
Illustrated by John Schönberg



Young Lawrence, an invalid, convinces his guardians, Preston the Professor and Burne the Lawyer, to take him along on an archaeological expedition to Turkey. Before they set out, they engage Yussuf as their guide. Through the months that follow, the friends travel deeper and deeper into the remote regions of central Turkey on their trusty horses in search of ancient ruins. Yussuf proves his worth time and time again as they face dangers from a murderous ship captain, poisonous snakes, sheer precipices, bands of robbers and more. Memorable characters, humor and adventure abound in this exciting story!

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THE MAGIC RUNES

EMMA LESLIE

Originally Published in 1888

“Who art thou?’ Godrith asked again.

‘Only a little Christian maiden,’ she said, still proceeding with her work.

‘But—but we are not Christians’ said Godrith, ‘we are Saxons, followers of the mighty Woden.’

‘It matters not,’ said the little girl calmly, ‘the White Christ loves Saxons, and hath sent me to help you.’”

Late one day, in the summer of 782 A.D., young Adalinda is startled to come upon a Saxon family in the forest where she lives with her father. Their tribe had been captured by Charlemagne’s soldiers and brought to France after they refused to convert to Christianity, but when Godrith’s wife and children grew too weak to continue marching, the family had been abandoned. Godrith is suspicious of Adalinda’s story, but when she learns how the “Christian” soldiers had burned his village and killed so many of his people, but as she and her father offer shelter to these Saxon strangers, Godrith begins to see a new picture of Christianity, and her small acts of service have a greater impact that Adalinda could have ever imagined.

Emma Leslie (1837-1909), whose actual name was Emma Dixon, was a prolific Victorian children’s author who wrote over 100 books.

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